

WINTERCAMP
ROUNDUP
14 July 1968

P. Nanda, Ved P.
P - Kraslow, David
SOC. 4.01.2 The Secret
Search for Peace in
Vietnam

Reporter Probe of Peace Talk Maneuvers Reveals Surprises

THE SECRET SEARCH FOR PEACE IN VIETNAM. By David Kraslow and Stuart H. Loory. Random House. \$5.95 hardback; Vintage paperback, \$1.95.

A GLARE OF PUBLICITY accompanies the Paris peace talks. Not much however, is widely known about the numerous "peace feelers" that preceded the opening of these talks, the various behind-the-scene maneuvers to get the parties together to negotiate a settlement of the Vietnam War, and the apparently insurmountable difficulties the go-betweens faced in arranging these talks.

Kraslow and Loory, Washington correspondents for the Los Angeles Times, have uncovered the untold story of these efforts, many of which led nowhere.

In August 1967, they started investigating the accuracy of widespread rumors in diplomatic circles in Washington and abroad that the public utterances of the U.S. officials indicating willingness to negotiate with North Vietnam were not matched by the private dealings of the administration, and that they were, in fact, responsible for several lost opportunities to find peace in Vietnam by escalating the bombing of North Vietnam at crucial times.

THEY FOUND that in 1964 the prevalent Washington mood was adverse to talks. At that time "the United States could not entertain the idea of talks or negotiations until

after it applied more military pressure on the enemy." This explains U Thant's futile initiative to get U.S.-North Vietnam to the negotiating table.

In 1966, Warsaw came into the picture. Diplomatic maneuvering involved the Polish authorities, the U.S. ambassador to Poland, and North Vietnam. The project, named "Marigold," was fragile and collapsed, with the U.S. bombing raids over Hanoi in December 1966. Their conclusion:

"The Marigold record does suggest, however, that Washington's national security bureaucracy has difficulty coping with the sensitive, tenuous problems of Vietnam diplomacy. One adviser who has studied the secret Vietnam files in the State Department said, 'Never underestimate stupidity, lack of judgment and lack of coordination as factors in foreign policy. What appears to be a pattern may not be a pattern at all. Things sometimes simply happen that are not supposed to happen.'"

Finally, Kraslow and Loory recount in fascinating detail the successful effort by two Frenchmen that culminated in the present talks. This was perhaps the first time that Washington was responsive to such initiatives.

"The Secret Search for Peace in Vietnam" is an absorbing account of Washington's attitude toward a negotiated settlement in Vietnam.

-VED P. NANDA